

Earl of Shaftesbury

A
DECLARATION
OF
Master William Lenthall Esquire, Speaker of the honorable House
OF
COMMONS,

WHEREIN

Is contained the grounds and reasons that moved him to absent him
selfe from the service of the House, on Friday
July 30. 1647.

TOGETHER

With his resolution not to attend that Service, till (by an effectuall
prevention of the like tumults) the Parliameut be inabled to
proceed in a free and Parliamentary way, without disturbance or
enforcement-

Published by his command, for the satisfaction of the Kingdome.

OXFORD

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1647.

MONTANA

THE GREAT WESTERN

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A
 DECLARATION
 OF
 M^R W. LENTHALL. Esq.

SPEAKER of the House of Commons, being the reasons and grounds that moved him to absent himselfe from attending the service
 on Friday, July 30.

1647.

Although it may happily be contrary to the Expectation of some, that I attend not the service of the House of Commons at this time, as I have constantly done for almost seven yeares last past; yet can it not be reasonably expected by any that will consider the violence offered to both the Houses of Parliament, and to my selfe in particular the last monday, July 26. Insomuch that I can safely take it upon my conscience, and so I doubt not may all the Members of both Houses also, that they sat in continuall feare of their lives, and by terrour thereof were compelled to passe such Votes as it pleased an unruly multitude to inforce upon them; which as I did then openly declare in the House, so I cannot but believe that they are all void and Nul, being extorted by force and violence, and in that manner that they were: And I cannot any longer dispencc with my selfe to be an instrument in passing such Votes, and to give any colour or

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shadow

shadow of Parliamentary authority unto them, which were not the Votes of the representative body of the Kingdome; but of a tumultuous multitude, as those must needs be accounted that seemed to passe the House on Monday July 26. and which shall passe hereafter. untill better provision be made for the safe and free sitting of the Houses of Parliament; there being no effectuall course taken by the City since the adiournment of the House, to prevent the like tumults for the future: no nor so much as a Declaration from them, to shew their dislike thereof: but on the contrary, it was generally voiced in the Towne, that there would be a farre greater confluence of Apprentizes, Reformado's, and others by Friday at the Parliament doores; and particular notice was given to me, that after they had made the House Vote what they pleased, they would destroy me: I had likewise information given me that there would be a great number of Apprentizes of a contrary opinion and affection to the other, about the Parliament doores on Friday morning, which I foresaw must of necessity cause a great combustion, and in probability occasion much blood-shed.

The prevention of which mischief (together with the consideration aforesaid) have weighed more with me, then any thing which may concerne my particular: and especially having served the Parliament faithfully and diligently for the space of almost seven yeares in a free and Parliamentary way of proceeding: that I might not now be made a servant to such a rude and tumultuous multitude, to transerre upon them the colour of Parliamentary authority, therewith to abuse, and deceive the minds, and to destroy the lives, liberties and estates of the People of this Kingdome, and having taken a solemn protection and Covenant, in my place
and

and calling, to maintaine the privilegedes of Parliament, and the rights and liberties of the Subject, I could not now satisfie my selfe, how I should discharge my duty therein, but by abienting my selfe at this time, rather then by my preience, to give any shadow or countenance of the authority of Parliament, to such apparent violation thereof, neither can the omission of a circumstance or some formality, in the adiournment of the House, when through force and violence it cannot meet gaier in any sort as a Parliament, be any prejudice to the future sitting and proceeding thereof, when it may meet and sit againe as a free Parliament: it being well knowne that nothing can dissolve this Parliament, but an Act of Parliament.

When a company of Apprentices, Reformados and others, shall call the Ordinances of both Houses of Parliament pretended Ordinances, shall locke the doores of the Houses upon them, shall sweare not to let them out till they have passed what they pleased concerning the Militia of London and other things (though the House had immediatly before voted otherwise) shall threaten the Houses in case they doe not instantly satisfie their demands; shall knock, hooite, and hollow at the Parliaments doores, that the Members could not be heard to speake or debate, and after the House of Commons had passed a Vote concerning the Militia of London, and that the Speaker by the Vote had iudged the maior part to be for the negative, shall not suffer the House to be devided, but in a threatning way require those that gave their Votes against them to come out to them if they would, when after the House was adiourned, they shall by maine force thrust back the Speaker againe into the House, and force the Members in their presence and sight, (direct thrusting themselves into the House) to Vote what they demanded, when they shall iuse, pull, and

hale the Speaker, all the way he went downe to his Caroch, and force him (to avoid the violence) to betake himselfe to the next Caroch he could get into, for refuge : When they shall breath forth bloody threats against the Members, as they come out of the House; and since against me in particular, at the next sitting of the House, as I am credibly informed, and when there is no appearance but that they will continue to doe as formerly they have done, or far worse on Fryday : I could not in discharge of my trust, Protestation, and Covenant, sit in the Chaire of the House of Commons, whilest it shall be in such a condition; but so soone as it may sit againe, in freedome and safety, I shall be ready to returne to the service of the House, but till then as I have upon the fore-mentioned grounds fully satisfied my owne conscience, so I doubt not but I shall give the whole Kingdome (whose interest is most concerned in it) ample satisfaction in the necessity of my action.

WILLIAM LENTHALL.
Speaker.

